

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY PLANNING & HOUSING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: PROPOSED CO-HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT  
4250/56/64/66/74 ALBERT STREET

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council support, in principle, the cohousing proposal for 4250-74 Albert Street as outlined in this report.
2. THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Cranberry Commons Cohousing Co-operative c/o Rosemary Lowe, 3719 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1J8.

REPORT

The Community Planning and Housing Committee, at its meeting held on 1999 June 29, received and adopted the attached report supporting the subject cohousing project. The Committee noted that cohousing is an alternative form of development where resident households are involved from the initial design stages in order to allow the built form to reflect the specific needs of the resident households. The Committee further advised that cohousing projects also incorporate facilities which are shared by all households such as common living space, play areas and kitchen facilities in order to facilitate shared meal preparation and areas for social interaction among residents. The Committee concluded by advising that if Council approves this project in principle, then staff will work with the Cranberry Commons Cohousing group through a rezoning application process.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor L.A. Rankin  
Chairman

Councillor C. Redman  
Member

: COPY - CITY MANAGER  
- DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.  
- CITY SOLICITOR

Councillor J. Young  
Member

**TO:** COMMUNITY PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMITTEE 1999 June 23

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**SUBJECT:** PROPOSED CO-HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT  
4250/56/64/66/74 ALBERT STREET

**PURPOSE:** To inform the Community Planning and Housing Committee about the proposed co-housing development on the subject site.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the Community Planning and Housing Committee support, in principle, the cohousing proposal for 4250-74 Albert Street as outlined in this report and recommend that Council support the proposal.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Cranberry Commons Cohousing Co-operative c/o Rosemary Lowe, 3719 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 1J8.

**R E P O R T**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Cranberry Commons Cohousing Co-operative is a group of households who have come together with a mandate of creating a Cohousing development in North Burnaby. Cohousing is an alternative approach to housing which typically takes the form of a development where resident households are involved from the initial design stages in order to allow the built form to reflect the specific needs of the resident households. Cohousing projects also incorporate facilities which are shared by-all households such as common living space, play areas and kitchen facilities in order to facilitate shared meal preparation and areas for social interaction among residents. The cohousing concept originated in Denmark and has become a model for the creation of communities where residents can share resources and be involved in community-oriented activities in order to enhance the social interaction between residents.

Cranberry Commons first formed as a group in 1992 and had attempted to secure a site in Vancouver, but were unsuccessful in finding an appropriate site. In 1997 the group turned their attention to Burnaby where they were able to find what they considered to be a suitable site that would fulfill the needs of the households involved. The Cranberry Commons Cohousing Cooperative currently consists of eight households with a variety of household types including families with children, seniors, singles and couples. The group has been incorporated as a standard

project is constructed. Cranberry Commons currently owns 4274 Albert Street and has approached the City for purchase of the four adjoining lots to the west for consolidation (see attached map). Upon adoption of this report, an in camera report would be forwarded to Council shortly regarding the proposed acquisition of the City-owned property.

The subject site is included in the Hastings Street Area Plan and is designated for 3½ storey townhouse development under RM7 - Hastings Village Multiple Family Residential zoning which is intended to provide ground-oriented townhouses. The site is currently zoned R5 - Residential district. The site is mostly flat, with a slight slope from the south-west down to the north-east. The site is surrounded by a municipal parking lot to the east, vacant lots designated for future redevelopment under RM7 guidelines to the west, existing single-family housing to the north and across the lane to the south there are commercial buildings designated for future mixed use redevelopment.

## 2.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The Cranberry Commons Cohousing group has submitted a conceptual plan to the Planning Department for review. The group is proposing to construct 23 units in a mixture of stacked townhouses and apartments with a "common house" on the approximately 1,870 m<sup>2</sup>/20,125 sq.ft. site. The current proposal includes a group of 3 separate buildings oriented around a central courtyard with most units being ground-oriented and a small number of units as apartments which would be serviced by an elevator. The common house includes an office, meeting room, lounge, play area and kitchen/dining area. Building height varies between 2 and 3½ storeys with pitched roofs to meet with the intention of the Hastings Street Area Plan. Setbacks are being proposed at 16 ft./4.9 m for front and rear yards and 14 ft./4.2m for side yards. A fully underground parking garage to be accessed off the lane to the south of the site is intended to provide all required parking. Exterior finishes are proposed to be a combination of "wood-like" siding, vinyl siding, stucco and corrugated metal with wooden trim and a fibreglass shingle roof.

Due to the accommodation of the common house a number of the zoning bylaw conditions for the RM7 zone would have to be relaxed to meet the current proposal. The maximum density permitted under RM7 is 1.1 FAR. The proposal from the Cranberry Commons group would require the granting of an additional 2,200 sq.ft./204.4 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space to accommodate the common house, resulting in a FAR of 1.2. Additionally, the setbacks in the RM7 Hastings Village Multiple Family Residential District are 24.61 ft./7.5 m for front yards, 29.53 ft./9 m for rear yards and 19.69 ft./6 m for side yards. The proposed setbacks, as noted above, would, therefore, also call for a significant reduction in setbacks. As a result of the necessary relaxations under RM7, a rezoning of the site to CD Comprehensive Development based on the RM4 Multiple Family District would be appropriate

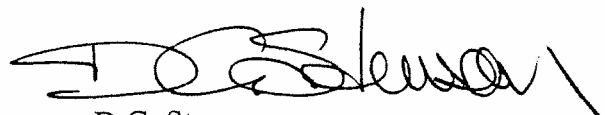
in order to allow the additional density to a specific maximum of 1.2 FAR. The chart below summarizes the relaxations from the RM7 District that would be required to accommodate the cohousing proposal:

	RM7 Bylaw Requirement	Cohousing Proposal
FAR	1.1 Maximum	1.2 (22,138 sq.ft. for units & 2,200 sq.ft. for common house)
Front Yard	7.5 m/25 ft.	4.9m/16 ft.
Rear Yard	9 m/30 ft.	4.9m/16 ft.
Side Yard	6m/20 ft.	4.3m/14 ft.

### 3.0 SUMMARY

The cohousing concept is an innovative approach to creating a community with a high level of resident involvement, from the earliest stages of design to daily functioning of the development. As well, cohousing encourages active participation and sharing of resources which presents opportunities for residents to enrich their involvement in their immediate and larger communities and creates alternative housing opportunities for the elderly or families with children who might otherwise have to rely on external service providers.

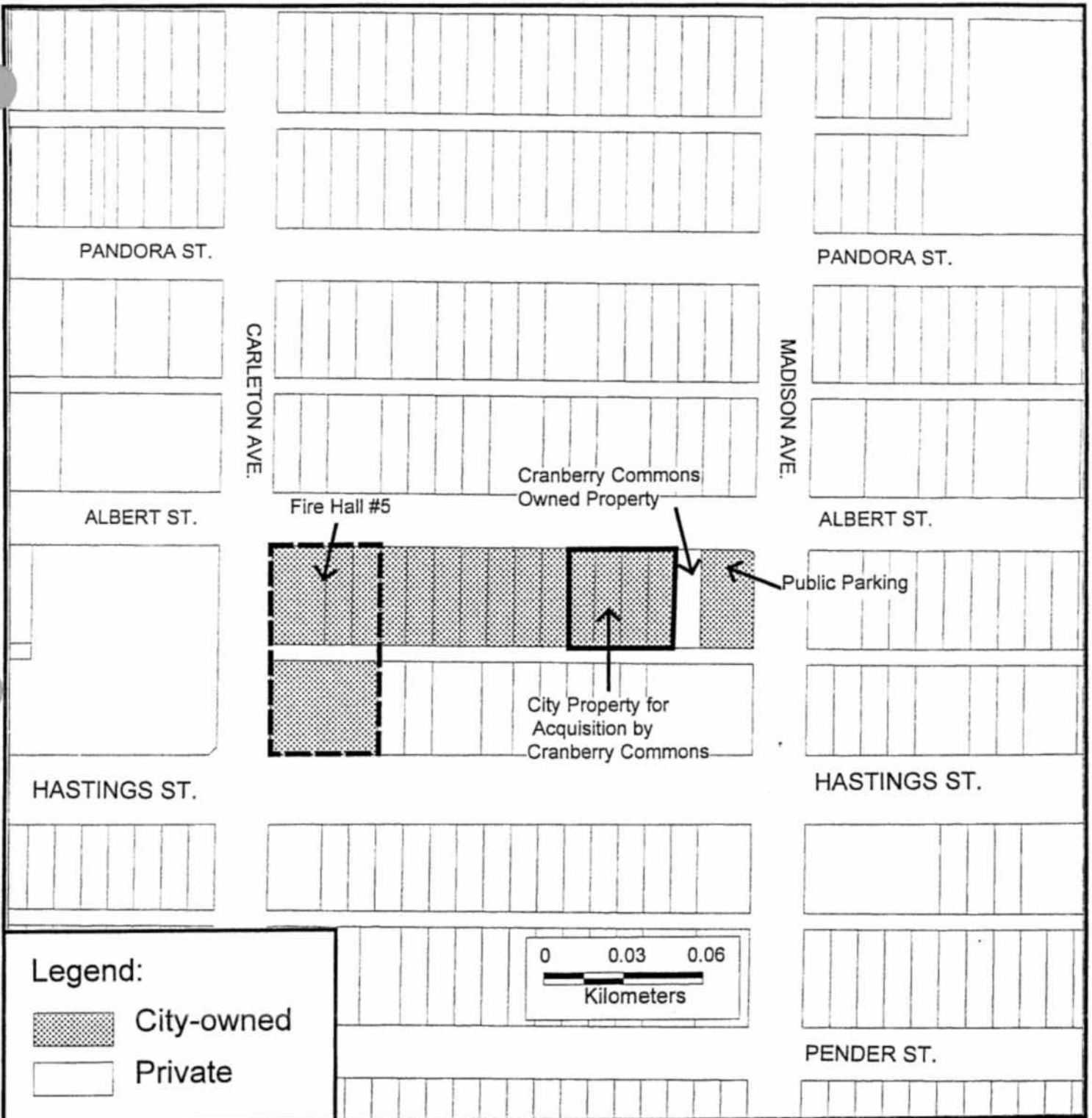
The Cranberry Commons Cohousing proposal for the 4200 block of Albert Street would require relaxations to allow extra density through increasing the maximum permitted FAR and reducing setbacks. If this project were to be considered a special case due to the distinctive social cohousing principles involved, staff would work with the Cranberry Commons Cohousing group towards ensuring that the design of the development be as sensitive as possible to the surrounding community while meeting the intention of the Hastings Street Area Plan. Upon adoption of this report by the Committee and Council, staff would work with the Cranberry Commons Cohousing group through a rezoning application subject to normal regulatory and review procedures associated with rezonings.



D.G. Stenson  
 Director Planning and Building

35

PSF/ds  
 Attach  
 cc: City Solicitor



# Cranberry Commons Cohousing Proposal

## Location Sketch



